

SAVAGE[®] 184

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**SAVAGE
DRAGON
ON TRIAL**

Handwritten signature and date: 1/93

SAVAGE DRAGON®

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a multi-level
meat and cheese monstrosity.

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WHAT?

YOU CAN'T
ARREST HIM!
DAD JUST
SAVED US
FROM
OVERLORD!

ARE YOU
CRAZY?

HE JUST
GOT HERE!



HE WAS IN
SPACE!

THAT'S ALL HUNKY-DORY, KIDS, BUT THERE'S
THIS LITTLE MATTER OF YOUR PAPA HERE
GOING ON A BLOODY RAMPAGE AND
LEVELING *SIX* CITY BLOCKS,
KILLING *THOUSANDS*--

AND THAT'S
JUST FOR
STARTERS!



I DON'T KNOW WHAT PENCIL-NECK WAS
PUT IN CHARGE OVER THERE AT THE AIR FORCE
OR WHAT YOU *SAID* TO SWEET TALK THEM INTO
GIVING YOU A LIFT OVER HERE, DRAGON,
BUT YOU'RE A WANTED MAN!

I'M AFRAID I'M
GOING TO HAVE TO
ASK YOU TO COME
WITH ME.



SERIOUSLY?

IT'S NO
JOKING
MATTER.

BUT...

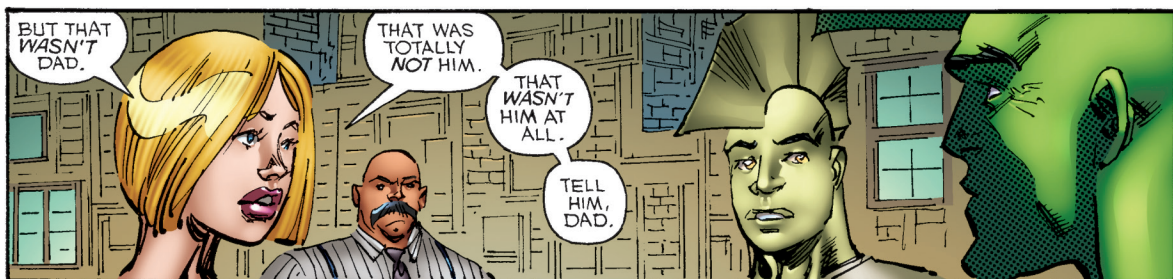


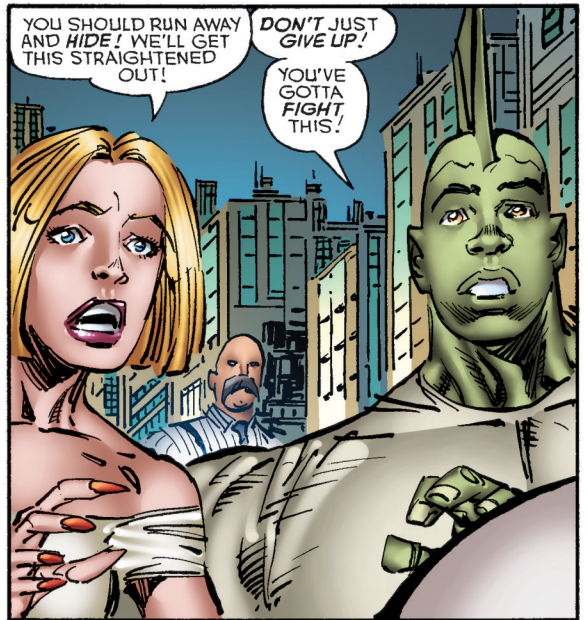
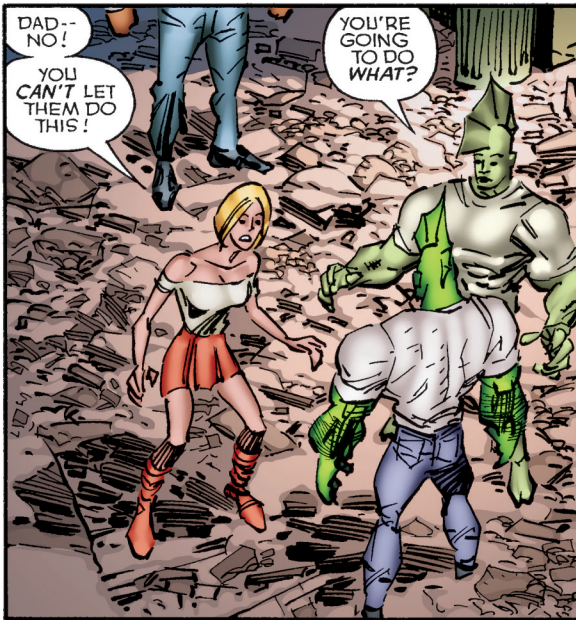
BUT THAT
WASN'T
DAD.

THAT WAS
TOTALLY
NOT HIM.

THAT
WASN'T
HIM AT
ALL.

TELL
HIM,
DAD.





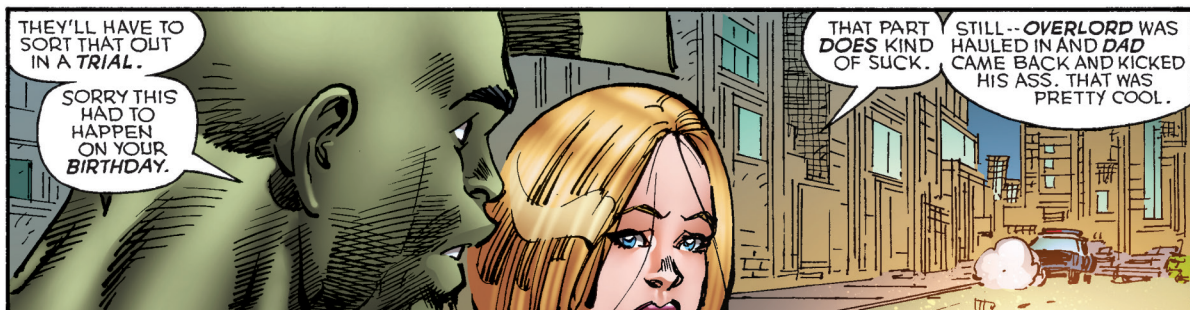


THIS IS
MESSED
UP.

DRAGON'S
RIGHT.

RUNNING
WOULD JUST
MAKE PEOPLE
THINK HE WAS
GUILTY.

BESIDES--
HE DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING
WRONG! HE WAS
EMPEROR
KURR AT
THE TIME.



THEY'LL HAVE TO
SORT THAT OUT
IN A TRIAL.

SORRY THIS
HAD TO
HAPPEN
ON YOUR
BIRTHDAY.

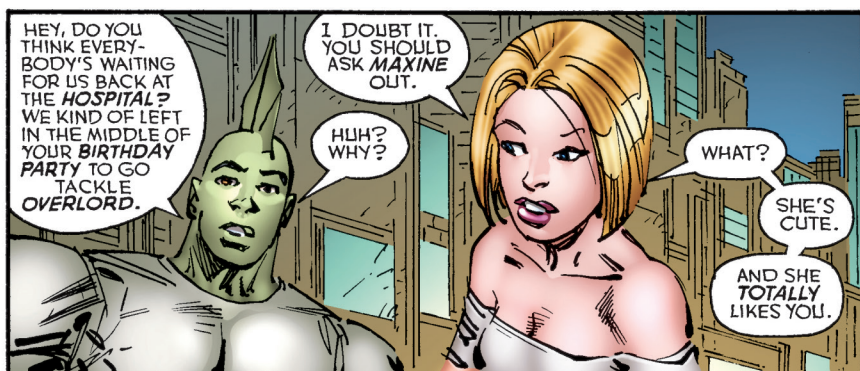
THAT PART
DOES KIND
OF SUCK.

STILL-- OVERLORD WAS
HAULED IN AND DAD
CAME BACK AND KICKED
HIS ASS. THAT WAS
PRETTY COOL.



FLASH
MERCURY.

I DID
NOT SEE
THAT ONE
COMING.



HEY, DO YOU
THINK EVERY-
BODY'S WAITING
FOR US BACK AT
THE HOSPITAL?
WE KIND OF LEFT
IN THE MIDDLE OF
YOUR BIRTHDAY
PARTY TO GO
TACKLE
OVERLORD.

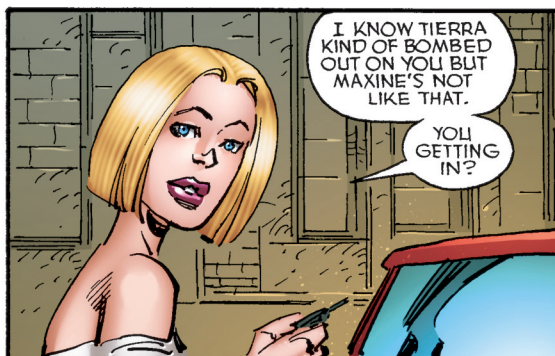
I DOUBT IT.
YOU SHOULD
ASK MAXINE
OUT.

HUH?
WHY?

WHAT?

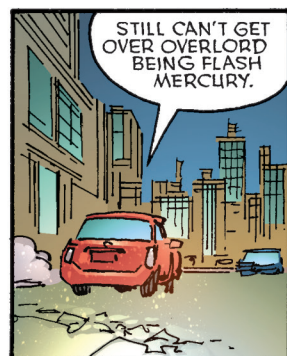
SHE'S
CUTE.

AND SHE
TOTALLY
LIKES YOU.



I KNOW TIERRA
KIND OF BOMBED
OUT ON YOU BUT
MAXINE'S NOT
LIKE THAT.

YOU
GETTING
IN?

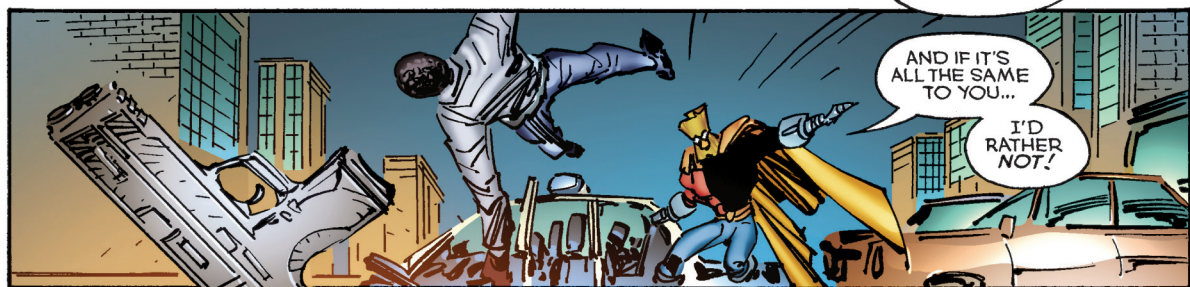
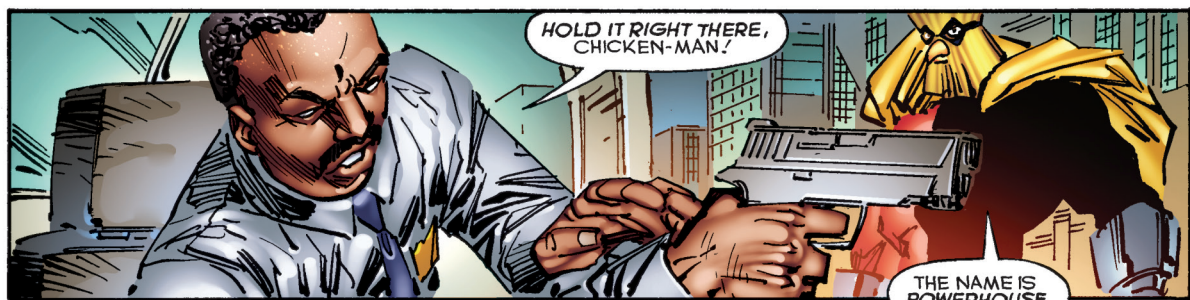
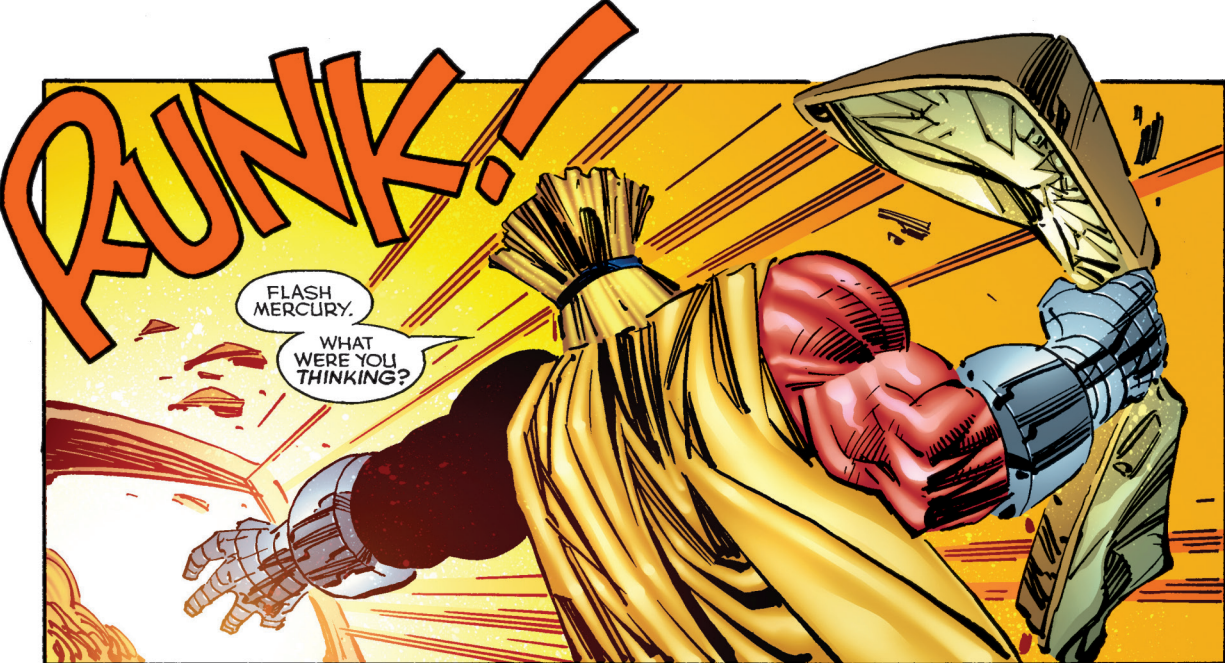


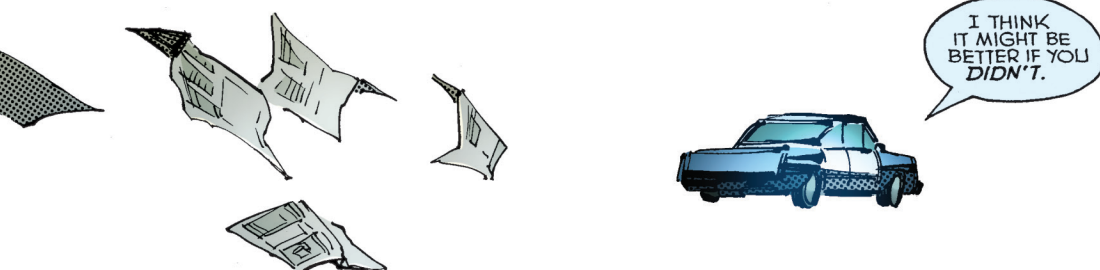
STILL CAN'T GET
OVER OVERLORD
BEING FLASH
MERCURY.



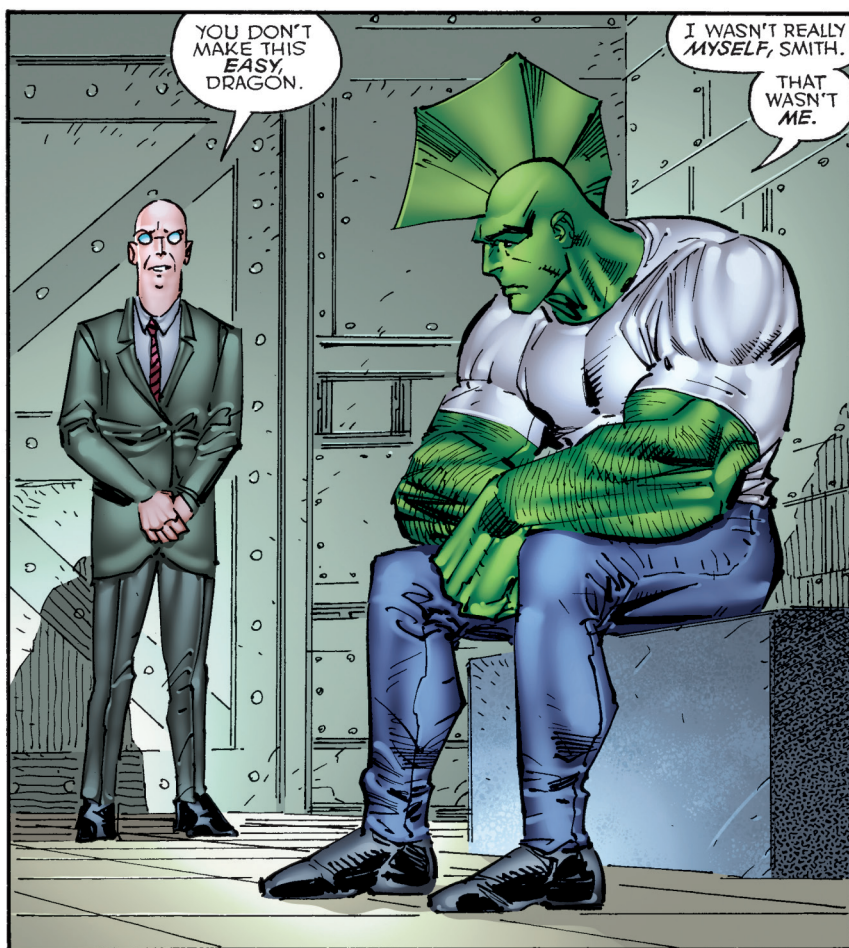
THAT'S FAR ENOUGH.

KRAKKA-BOOM!









YOU DON'T
MAKE THIS
EASY,
DRAGON.

I WASN'T REALLY
MYSELF, SMITH.

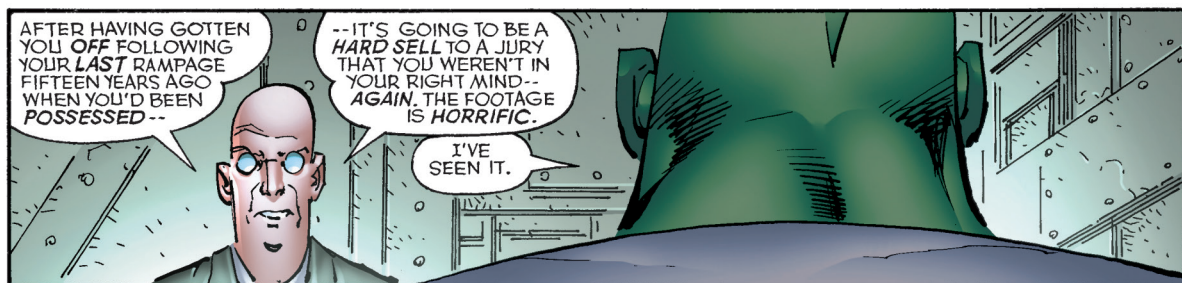
THAT
WASN'T
ME.



YOU'RE GOING
WITH **THAT** OLD
CHESTNUT
AGAIN?

IT'S THE
TRUTH.

AFTER A MONSTER CALLED
VIRUS ATE MOST OF MY BRAIN,
I REVERTED TO **EMPEROR**
KURR-- THE GUY I WAS BEFORE
I WAS FOUND IN A VACANT LOT
20 YEARS AGO.



AFTER HAVING GOTTEN
YOU **OFF** FOLLOWING
YOUR **LAST** RAMPAGE
FIFTEEN YEARS AGO
WHEN YOU'D BEEN
POSSESSED --

--IT'S GOING TO BE A
HARD SELL TO A JURY
THAT YOU WEREN'T IN
YOUR RIGHT MIND--
AGAIN. THE FOOTAGE
IS **HORRIFIC.**

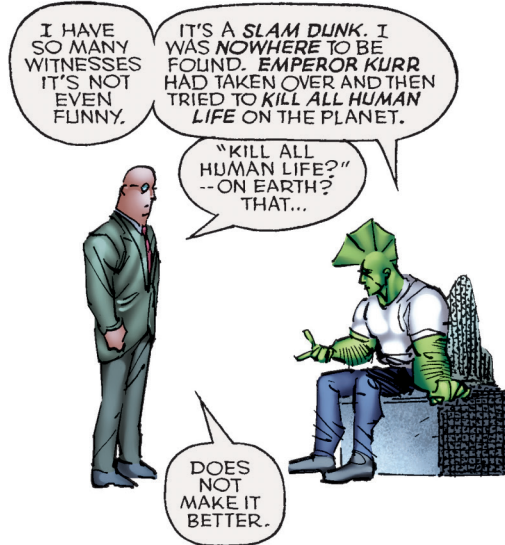
I'VE
SEEN IT.



BUT TRUTHFULLY-- I
WAS A DIFFERENT GUY.
I HAD A FUNNY ACCENT
AND EVERYTHING.

ASK MY KIDS.

ASK
CAPTAIN
STEWART.

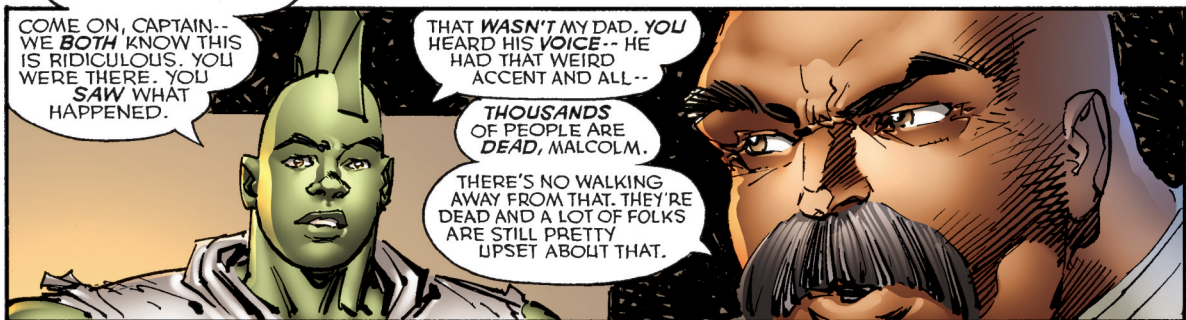


I HAVE
SO MANY
WITNESSES
IT'S NOT
EVEN
FUNNY.

IT'S A **SLAM DUNK.** I
WAS **NOWHERE** TO BE
FOUND. **EMPEROR KURR**
HAD TAKEN OVER AND THEN
TRIED TO **KILL ALL HUMAN**
LIFE ON THE PLANET.

"KILL ALL
HUMAN LIFE?"
--ON EARTH?
THAT...

DOES
NOT
MAKE IT
BETTER.





IT'S
MINE!

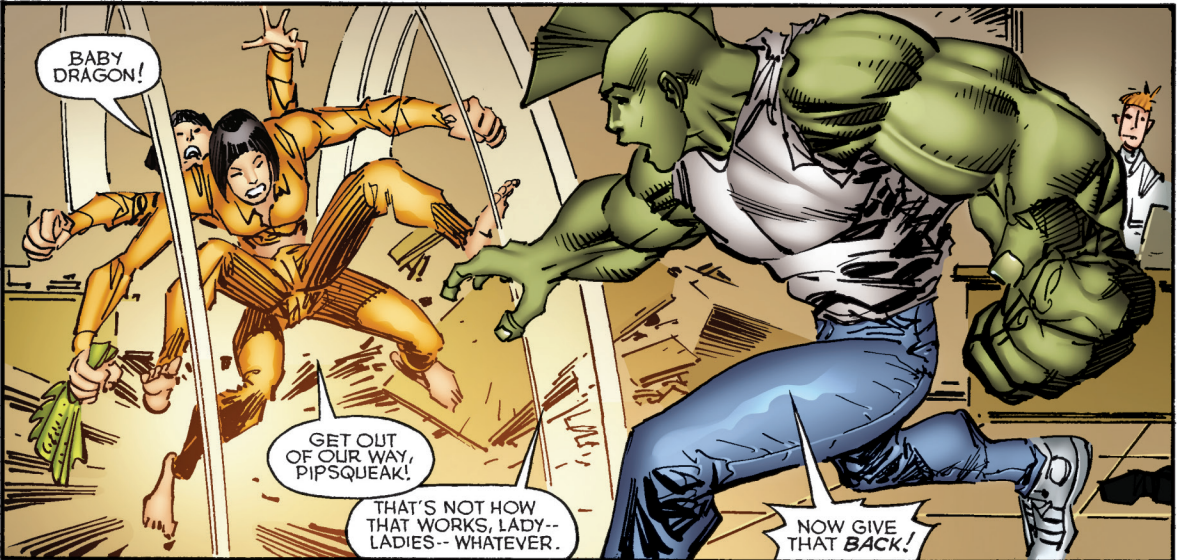
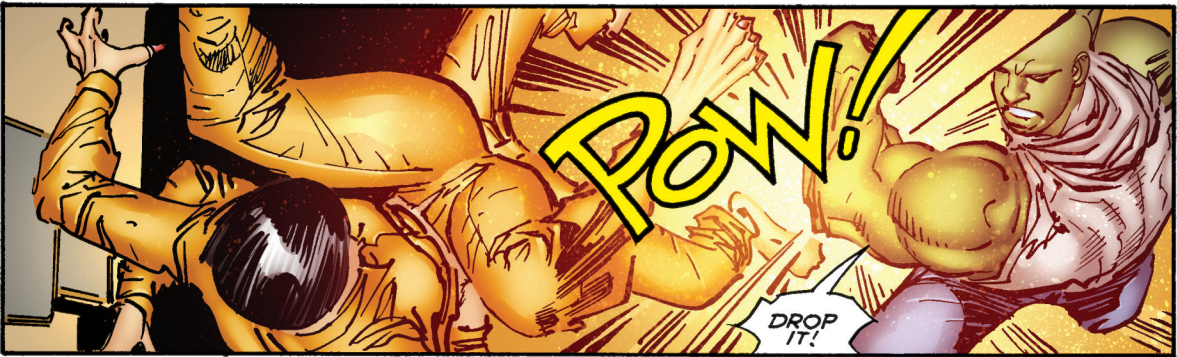
UNNGH!

WUNK!!

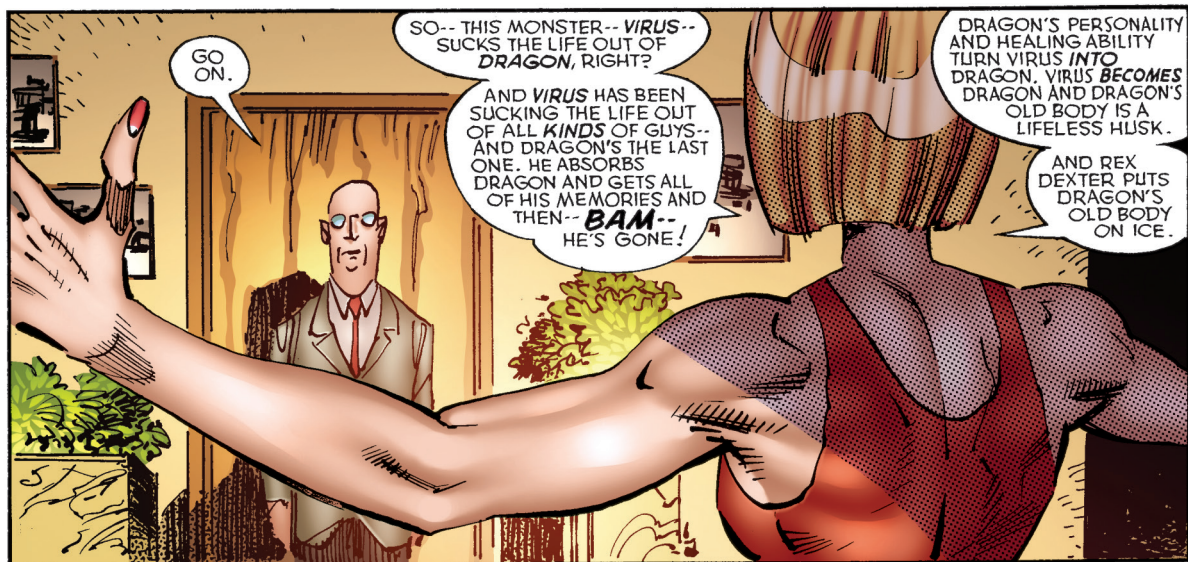


WRAM!

CRASH!







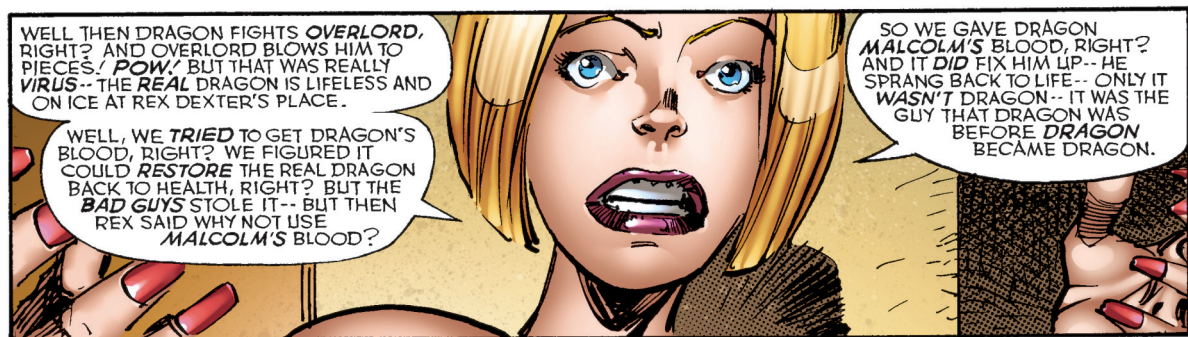
GO ON.

SO-- THIS MONSTER-- **VIRUS**-- SUCKS THE LIFE OUT OF **DRAGON**, RIGHT?

AND **VIRUS** HAS BEEN SUCKING THE LIFE OUT OF ALL **KINDS** OF GUYS-- AND **DRAGON**'S THE LAST ONE. HE ABSORBS **DRAGON** AND GETS ALL OF HIS MEMORIES AND THEN-- **BAM**-- HE'S GONE!

DRAGON'S PERSONALITY AND HEALING ABILITY TURN **VIRUS** INTO **DRAGON**. **VIRUS** **BECOMES** **DRAGON** AND **DRAGON**'S OLD BODY IS A LIFELESS HUSK.

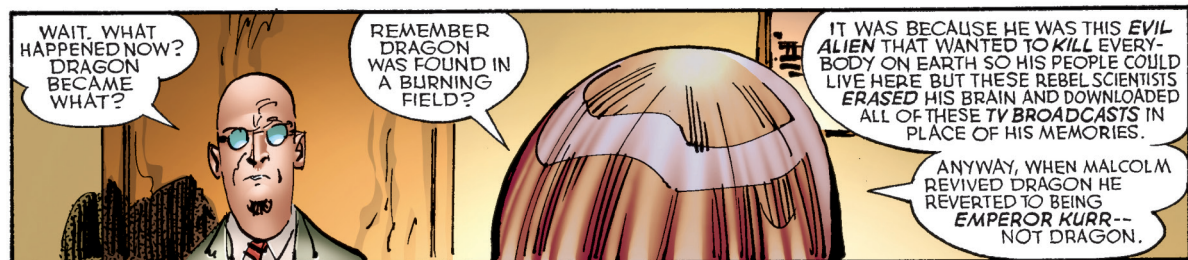
AND **REX** **DEXTER** PUTS **DRAGON**'S OLD BODY ON ICE.



WELL THEN **DRAGON** FIGHTS **OVERLORD**, RIGHT? AND **OVERLORD** BLOWS HIM TO PIECES. **POW!** BUT THAT WAS REALLY **VIRUS**-- THE **REAL** **DRAGON** IS LIFELESS AND ON ICE AT **REX** **DEXTER**'S PLACE.

WELL, WE **TRIED** TO GET **DRAGON**'S BLOOD, RIGHT? WE FIGURED IT COULD **RESTORE** THE **REAL** **DRAGON** BACK TO HEALTH, RIGHT? BUT THE **BAD** GUYS STOLE IT-- BUT THEN **REX** SAID WHY NOT USE **MALCOLM**'S BLOOD?

SO WE GAVE **DRAGON** **MALCOLM**'S BLOOD, RIGHT? AND IT **DID** FIX HIM UP-- HE SPANG BACK TO LIFE-- ONLY IT **WASN'T** **DRAGON**-- IT WAS THE GUY THAT **DRAGON** WAS BEFORE **DRAGON** BECAME **DRAGON**.

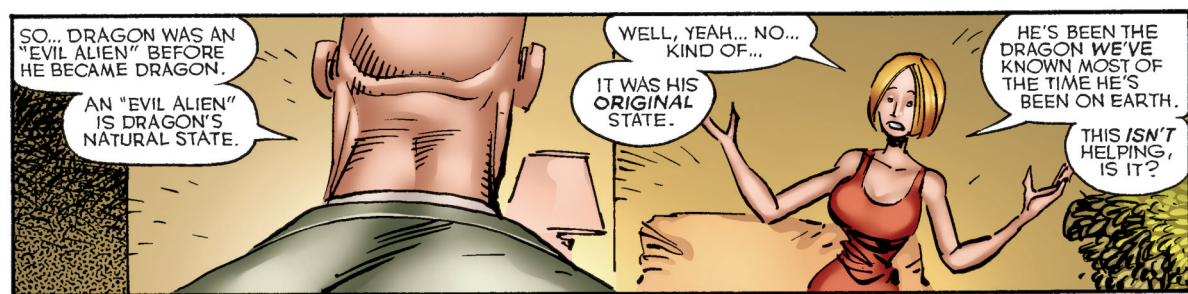


WAIT. WHAT HAPPENED NOW? **DRAGON** BECAME WHAT?

REMEMBER **DRAGON** WAS FOUND IN A BURNING FIELD?

IT WAS BECAUSE HE WAS THIS **EVIL ALIEN** THAT WANTED TO **KILL** EVERYBODY ON EARTH SO HIS PEOPLE COULD LIVE HERE BUT THESE REBEL SCIENTISTS **ERASED** HIS BRAIN AND DOWNLOADED ALL OF THESE **TV** **BROADCASTS** IN PLACE OF HIS MEMORIES.

ANYWAY, WHEN **MALCOLM** REVIVED **DRAGON** HE REVERTED TO BEING **EMPEROR** **KURR**-- NOT **DRAGON**.



SO... **DRAGON** WAS AN "EVIL ALIEN" BEFORE HE BECAME **DRAGON**.

AN "EVIL ALIEN" IS **DRAGON**'S NATURAL STATE.

WELL, YEAH... NO... KIND OF...

IT WAS HIS **ORIGINAL** STATE.

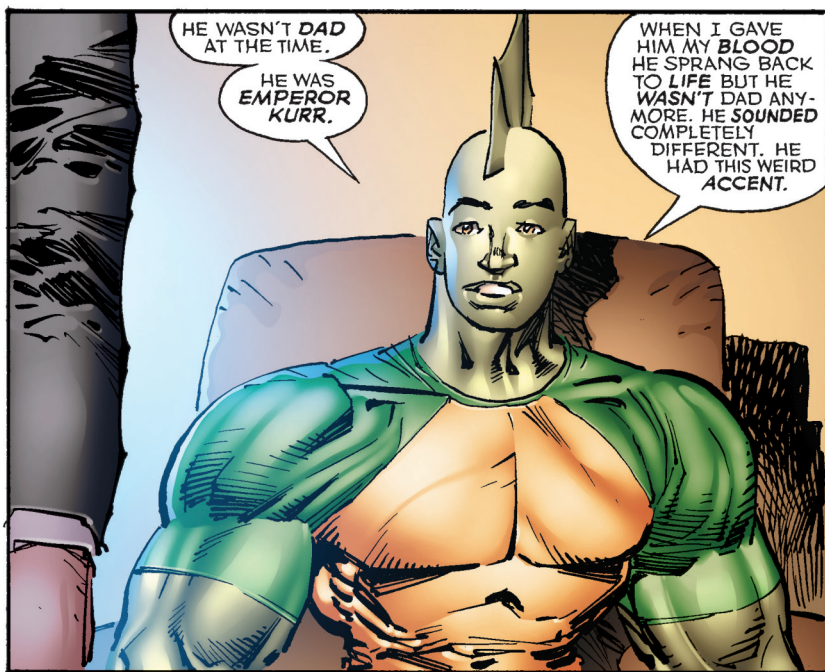
HE'S BEEN THE **DRAGON** WE'VE KNOWN MOST OF THE TIME HE'S BEEN ON EARTH.

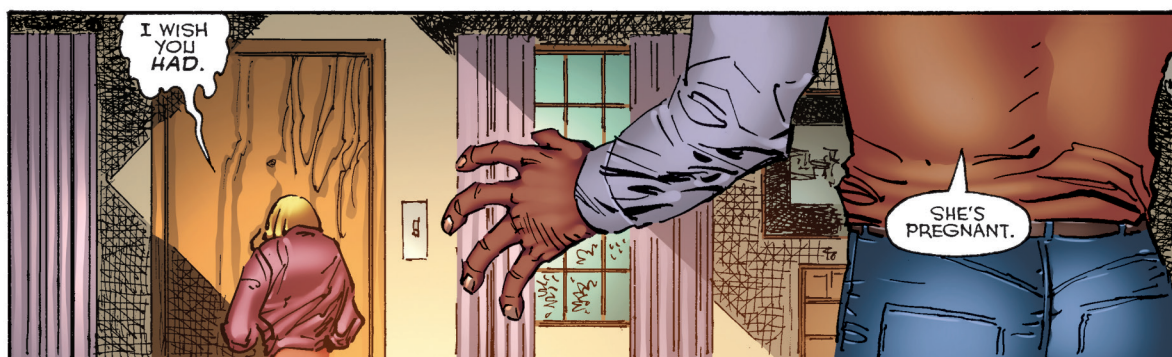
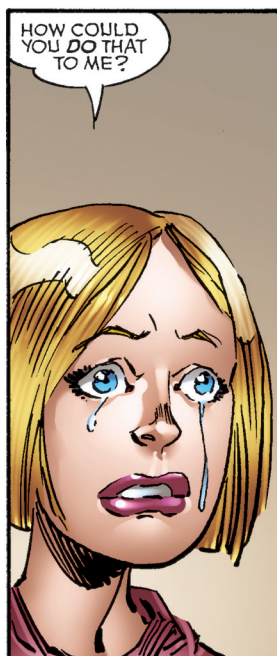
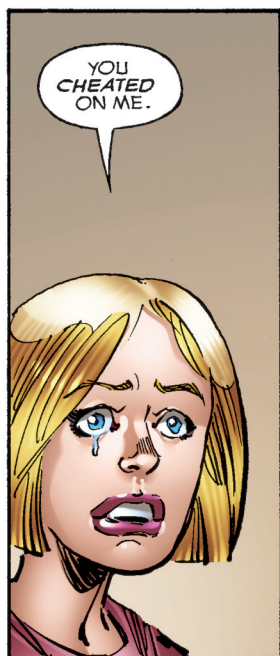
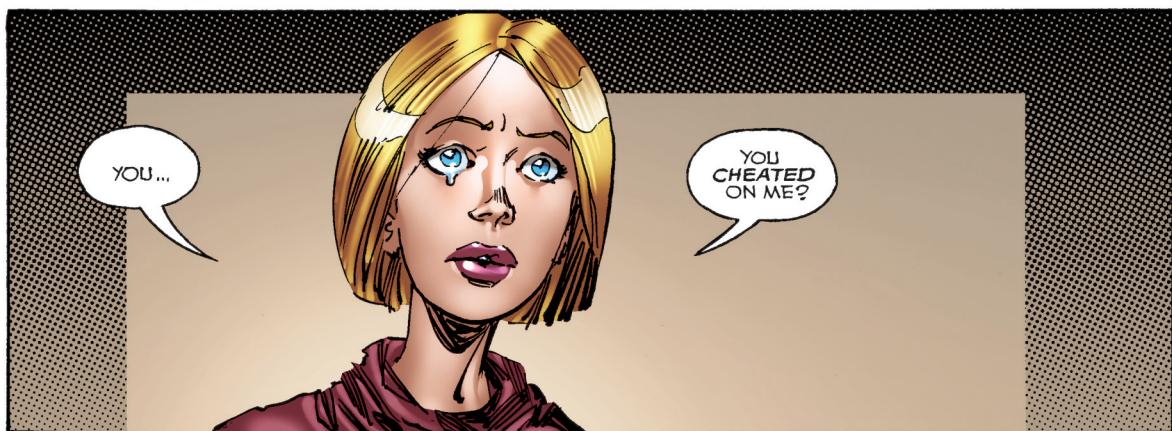
THIS **ISN'T** HELPING, IS IT?



I DON'T THINK TELLING A JURY THAT **DRAGON**'S NATURAL STATE IS AN "EVIL ALIEN" WILL HELP HIS CASE SIGNIFICANTLY, NO.

I'LL SEE WHAT **ELSE** I CAN COME UP WITH.







HEY.

MALCOLM!



HI... UH...
MAXINE.

SO, YOU'RE,
LIKE, **WORKING**
HERE NOW,
HUH?

YOU
GRADUATED,
RIGHT?



YEAH.

CAN I GET
YOU
ANYTHING?



ANGEL SAYS THAT YOU
TOTALLY LIKE ME AND
THAT I SHOULD
ASK YOU OUT.

SO...
DO YOU WANT
TO GO TO A
MOVIE WITH ME
OR SOMETHING?

REALLY?



ME?

I MEAN--
YES!

THAT
WOULD
BE
GREAT.



I'LL
CALL
YOU.

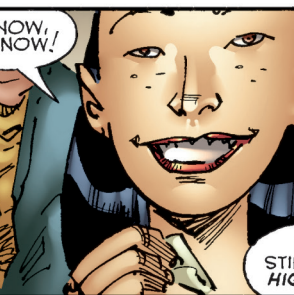


OKAY.



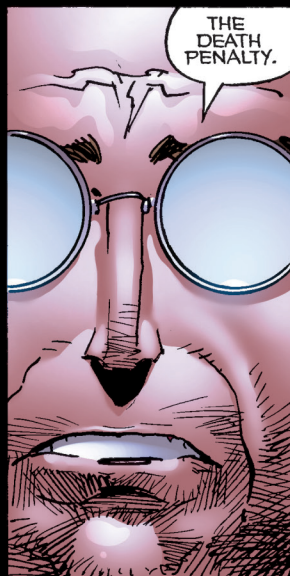
OKAY... I CAN NOT
BELIEVE I JUST
WITNESSED THAT.

THAT WAS
EPIC.



I KNOW,
I KNOW!

ISN'T HE
STILL IN, LIKE,
HIGH SCHOOL?





SO...

IT
WORKED.

YES.

ALL THAT
TIME... WARGOD
DID IT... HE
ACTUALLY
PULLED
IT OFF.

WE COULD
HAVE BROUGHT
BACK MY DAD...
MY MOM...
ANYBODY.

KURT COBAIN,
JOHN LENNON,
JFK...

I DON'T
EVEN
KNOW WHO
YOU ARE.

NO MATTER.

YOU WILL
ALL KNOW
SOON
ENOUGH.

OKAY...

LOOK... THIS HAS
BEEN *FUN*... BUT I'VE
GOT TO MOVE ON. WITH
WARGOD DEAD AND HIS
MACHINES DESTROYED
I'M PRETTY MUCH OUT
OF A *JOB*.

I'VE BEEN LIVING OUT OF
THE BACK OF HIS *SHED* HERE
BUT WITHOUT HIS *MACHINES*
AND THE *PROMISE* OF REVIVING
FALLEN ALLIES, THE *VICIOUS*
CIRCLE IS LIKELY TO
CUT ME OFF.

SO...

GOOD LUCK
WITH... *WHATEVER*
IT IS YOU HAVE
PLANNED. I
HAVE TO GO.

YOU SHALL GO
NOWHERE.



YOU
WORK
FOR ME
NOW!

YOU DO
MY
BIDDING!

YOUR LIFE--
AND THE VERY
PLANET--
BELONGS TO
THE

CLAW!

THIS
WORLD IS
MINE!

e-mail: Erik@savagedragon.comvisit our website at www.savagedragon.com

I'd like to welcome aboard Gavin Higginbotham as the brand spankin' new editor on this mirthful mag. Gay has been unofficial continuity cop for some time and I thought it was time to make that official. He's not the editor in the traditional sense that he can hire and fire folks but he's along for the ride in regard to making sure this unwieldy mess of mine isn't quite such an unwieldy mess.

Savage Dragon #181 received an extraordinary amount of mail. The reason being that it had a blank letters page and that compelled many readers to finally break their silence and write in. We'll be playing catch up next month once we have more space to play with. In the meantime...here's more of your letters to Savage Dragon #181...

Hey Erik,

20 issues ago I got my first ever letter of comment printed in a comic book. Now, with SD #181, there are no letters at all. That just ain't right. So, I'm gonna try to do my part to make sure that there are no more blank Fin Addicts pages. SD #181 was an entertaining 'wrap-up' issue of the past events of the big invasion. Seeing Dragon clobber six shades of Sunday outta his well meaning but inept and poorly trained kid was fun. The speech about religion was slightly heavy handed, but nonetheless apt to the framework of the story. Hell, sometimes you gotta blow off some steam, I get that. This whole Emperor Dragon/Dragon in Space/crazy ass multi-issue arc was great, but it'll be good to see Dragon back on earth where he belongs. All in all, a pretty good issue.

I still have some gaps in the old collection, but sooner or later I'm gonna have the whole mother, and by god, my plan is to sit down and read them all back to back, allowing breaks for sleep, food, work, and other unimportant things. Ironically enough, I'm sure I'll skip the letters pages, since some of the early issues had upwards of 10 (!) pages of letters sometimes, and those take forever to wade thru.

Comics aren't nearly as enjoyable as they used to be, with the Big 2 doing seemingly everything in their power to piss off all the old fans in order to attempt to make one or two new ones. A lot of my favorite titles are ending, and much like 10 years ago, I'm probably gonna cut down my reading/collecting to minimal. However, I still get my two SD books whenever they come out, and I will continue to do so until you either quit making them, or I pop my clogs. There aren't many comics out there that can go 180+ issues and maintain any sort of quality or freshness, but somehow you've got it figured out. I'm just wondering if taking on Supreme is keeping SD from coming out in a more timely fashion. Still, great stuff whenever it happens. Take it easy, and see you next time.

Jason Garlock
Portland, OR

Honestly, I can see why #179 received less love than some other issues. It was the middle of a three-part invasion story and as such it was building to something but not getting there. The following issue generated the usual number of letters.

My run on Supreme is officially over at this point. I signed on to get things rolling and set the stage for the next guy...whoever that might be. It was a fun book to work on, for sure, but I've got a million other things I'd like to do and I can't do it all if I don't let some things go.

Erik,

Wow, no letters in Savage Dragon #181?? What's the comic world coming too? I remember back in the day when it was a big deal to get a letter published, like you were actually a part of your favorite comic adventure. I still enjoy reading fan's letters and Erik's answers and I still get a thrill when I see one of my letters published. This kind of lack of feedback could persuade Erik to get rid of a letter's page all together! So I will continue to write fan letters while I still have the chance and encourage all my fellow readers to do the same.

On to issue 181 itself... Even though this is kind of an aftermath issue that sets up a lot of future plot lines, a lot of cool stuff is happening. It starts out with a great little fight between Dragon and his son.

Erik draws great super battles and this was no exception. Dragon really takes it to Krull. One question, Dragon talks about being almost 50 now. I remember in the past it's at least been hinted at that Dragon doesn't age as fast as humans, so, does he actually feel like he isn't at his peak? He looked faster and stronger than his son, as well as being an overall better fighter. Has it been established that Dragon is aging significantly or is it still a mystery?

And I don't think Dragon's speech to his "people" is going to be enough to change their entire civilization. Sure, he's found a new home for them and leaving them now at this critical juncture will force them to reevaluate their whole culture, but it just seemed a little...abrupt. Yeah, yeah, I know, limitations of the medium, and we don't have to see every boring detail. But I don't think we've seen the last of the dragon race. Lorella and Krull seem like they're dedicated to their civilization, but they're also incredibly naive, so I can see them getting into all kinds of trouble in the future.

And speaking of Dragon leaving his people and returning to earth...yes, I would love to see it! But he ain't there yet! I have no idea where Darklord is going off too or why he abandoned Dragon (heck, I forget what Darklord was doing there to begin with!). Even if Dragon wants to get back to Earth doesn't mean that's a part of Erik's plans. And if Erik's plans include really having Malcolm taking over the book, then I would expect Dragon won't be showing up on Earth for a while (with the possibility he won't ever make it back). That's OK too, I've learned over the years to never try to second guess Erik. It's obvious Erik is nowhere near being completely done with Dragon, so I'm anxious to see what comes next. I always did

love Dragon's space adventures, hopefully he'll run into Vanguard again...

Hey I gotta go but before I sign off, just want to mention the fact that issue 200 isn't far off! Did you ever imagine you'd make it this far Erik?

Later

Don Massi
25 Thompson Ave.
Mt. Ephraim, NJ 08059

Having Dragon age slower, to me, feels like a cheat. The book is set in real time, after all, and having the title character be the exception to that rule just doesn't seem fair.

As far as Dragon's departure went...yeah, it was a bit abrupt but he was very concerned with what was happening back home. So he made sure things were somewhat settled and took it from there. Will he regret his abrupt departure in the long run? Only time will tell.

Hi, Erik,

It's me, John Pannozzi from the Image boards.

I must say that when I saw that empty letters page in SD #181, I was immediately inspired to write in. Now I don't have much to say about #181 itself, except that I thought it was okay and I look forward to more issues as always, so I have some SD-related questions that I hope you can answer:

1. Not directly Dragon-related, but I've read that Mario Gully recently the rights to his character Ant due to his current immense personal and financial troubles, but oddly enough I can't find out who he sold it. In the time between your first reading of this letter and when it goes to print, could you please try to dig around a little bit and try to find out who Ant's new owner is?

2. When it comes to characters who appear in back-ups and spin-offs of SD who aren't created by you (examples include X-32 from SD #122; Mr., Mrs. and Silvia Evans from SD #136; Shuttup from the Twisted Funny in SD #168; Marcia Brady and No-Name from Deadly Duo Vol. 2 #3; Calinda Ardor, Julius Schwartenaggar and Rob Brady from Deadly Duo Vol. 2 #4; Baron Potentate and G.U.A.R.D. from SuperPatriot: America's Fighting Force; and Earle Sutton from SuperPatriot: War on Terror), who owns them, their respective creators or you? I know that Gary Carlson owns Deathwatch and Lurch, Gary and Andy Smith own Imagineer, Amok is owned by Gary and Scot Eaton, Fusion is owned by John Clearly and you, Hydro is owned by Dave Johnson, Tom and Mary Bierbaum and Ben Herrera own Gauntlet, Tom and Mary Bierbaum and Adam Hughes own Guillotine and Jason Pearson owns all the characters introduced in the Blood and Guts miniseries, but can we assume the same goes for characters who owners aren't defined in the legal indicia?

3) Any chance of releasing the A Force to Be Reckoned With, the Fallen, Possessed, Revenge and Gang War on Comixology, graphically, etc? I'd like to have all the extra story pages available digitally.

4) Aside from a Herakles comic that you and Cory Hamscher did, are there any other unpublished Dragon/Highbrow-related out there?

5) Why don't you reprint and possibly colorize the Mighty Man story "Ominous Reprieve" from Big Bang Comics #7 as a backup in a future issue of SD, maybe after the Vanguard serial ends in #183? It's the only Mighty Man story from Big Bang that has never been reprinted in SD.

6) I've noticed that there are two short scenes (each less than a page long) from WildC.A.T.s #14 that aren't included in the Possessed trade: one where Jeremy "Maul" meets his old girlfriend Margo Silva at the hospital, and another where he encounters Ann Stevens on the beach. It'd be cool if you included both of these as extras in whatever SD Ultimate Collection includes that story (maybe the second?).

7) Who exactly owns the copyright to Image United? Image as a company, or Image meaning all you guys who worked on it?

Keep the good work, looking forward to future issues of SD and Supreme (not to mention the rest of Image United and the glory that will be the SD Ultimate Collections), your fan for life,

John Pannozzi

1: I'll get back to you on that one. Typically, these are the sorts of things where folks like to make a formal announcement. The new owner may not take kindly to a guy spilling the beans in their letters column.

2: I always assume it's the creator and I'll ask if I want to use the characters. In some cases the folks working on the books have let it be known that they want me to have the characters but I would never assume that was the case. If any of the creators involved wanted to use the characters I'd have no problem with that and generally speaking, I keep a hands off approach to them.

3: Good idea. I'll bring it up.

4: Not much. A couple issues of Vanguard were started and never finished.

5: That's a possibility. At some point I'd like to color the entire Dragon arc from Big Bang and release it.

6: It's possible. It's kind of messy though since bits and pieces of selected pages were included in Savage Dragon #13.

7: All the guys working on it.

Dear Savage Larsen,

So AllGod wasn't all that huh?

So Dragon brings democracy to his people but he couldn't get them to give up those damn urine receptacles. And speaking of that-You know Krull wasn't

wearing one during the blood match. So when Dragon “spanked” him did he just wet himself all over the arena?

Y’know, it would be interesting to see what crop springs forth from the seed that Dragon has planted upon Kalyptus. Then later it all goes bad and then later you could have “The Wrath Of Krull” or “The Wrath Of Lorella.” Later to be followed by “The Search For Vanguard” or “The Search For Powerhouse.”

Angel and Malcolm sittin’ in a tree K-I-S-S-I-N-G...

Silly Dragon doesn’t he know not to trust somebody named Damien Darklord? Until next time...

Same Dragon comic...same Dragon comic book store!

Douglas Nelson,
Sulphur, LA

P.S. Sorry about not writing but it’s been a really awful year. Just keep producing the only comic I can depend on and I’ll keep reading.

Done and done.

What Up Erik,

First off... Sorry for not writing in for a while (no excuse really) I need to make more time for it obviously (as do some other folks apparently). One of my Professors used to always say to us that “we always make time for what is important to us”... He was not always awesome to work with but he WAS right on that score at least. That one phrase struck me as quite profound and it has stuck with me for almost ten years now... As such you have my word that I’ll stop slacking on the letters (it is a staple for this book after all). It is the least I could do.

And speaking of profound... You made some pretty big statements yourself this time around (both during and AFTER the smack down between Father and Son of course... which was Awesome and Hilarious, FTW) although you veiled them quite well. This book always shows its best colors during the Election Years, in my opinion, and this year may just be the most important in our Nation’s history, to be sure. Oh the times, they are a CHAAAAANGIIIN!

I know you are fairly politically active on top of all you have going on and that you are a big supporter of our Commander In Chief (good for you). I LOVE how you draw parallels in your work to current events, complete with a message and all (“people can change and change can be good”). The whole GOD IS DEAD thing left me taken aback I have to admit (I had actually forgotten about that in the last few months) so I am interested to see where that will go in the days to come... The page placement/timing there struck me as odd, but maybe I’m looking too much into it (RIP AllGod). When do we see Herakles and Co.? I’m sure they are pissed (WHERE THE F#\$% IS POWERHOUSE?!?!?) as Earth has some splainin’ to do... Have we really “killed God” in your opinion, Erik (you are an Atheist, right)? If so, HOW so (for the sake of argument, humor me). I am no Religious Man myself (agnostic, FTW) so I’m interested in your thoughts here? I’m quite intrigued to see how my fellow Finheads react to this...

Nice use of Gray tones during the Earth Aftermath scenes... Poor Malcolm and Angel. Young Love is so hard (i.e. AWFUL), is it not? Dragon is 50, huh? Didn’t see that coming... And on top of ALL of those goodies we get some much needed Overlord time next issue (after an all too brief cameo this time around). I wonder if my prediction is right... but don’t worry. I won’t drop any spoilers here. Spoilers suck.

All in all this issue was well worth the wait in my opinion so don’t beat yourself up over it. The Blank letters page (BLINDING white as it is) aside this is one of the best issues to date in the entire run. Nice job.

See ya on the Flipside... Oh, and the backups were good too (yes...Powerhouse gets a mention, FTW). When does Supreme show up? Sorry to hear you are done with that, BTW... It is super good.

Cam Stylez

P.S. Savage Dragon XBOX LIVE Arcade Game one day, maybe??? Streets of Rage style??? Think about it :) The World deserves it...

That sort of thing is not my call. If they ring me up I’ll take the call.

While I am an atheist I don’t really write the book as an atheist. I think it’s a lot more interesting to be more inclusive than not. I came up with an idea of religion that works in the context of the book and I’m sticking with that.

Erik,

Savage Dragon #181 was great—a nice change of pace from the recent multi-issue epics. It’s time for a numbered list of issue highlights!

1) The cover: I like the limited palette and the interplay between the yellow, green, grays, and browns. Classy! I also like how in the Savage Dragon universe, there’s a chunk of floating rock every five feet in space. The less saturated green for Dragon’s skin makes me wonder: do you have a list of the exact CMYK formulas for Dragon in different lighting conditions, or just his “real” base color which can be adjusted, to taste, to fit the situation?

2) Regarding the colors again, the fight between Dragon and Krull looks so good! Who made the decision to make this scene almost completely green, yellow, and white? It works! The action’s clear, everything’s easy to follow, and Krull with his head stuck in the wall is great. The panel where he’s hanging there limp brings to mind Winnie the Pooh stuck in the rabbit hole. Humiliating!

3) Pages 12 and 13 (I think): Good choice putting these scenes next to each other. The two previous pages are so vivid that the relative muted grayness of these pages really sells the gloom of the environments.

4) Page 17, panel 3: Of all of the small faces in this issue, Krull’s in this panel is my favorite.

5) Page 21: One of the saddest pages in Savage Dragon history!

6) Overall, I think you nailed the structure on this issue. It’s a strong example of your recent style of telling multiple stories per issue via very short scenes.

7) I’ll say (write) it again: I was really impressed with the coloring on this issue. In fact, it’s been better than usual (I think) for a little while now. I almost wrote a letter a few issues back just to say that the coloring in the winter scenes in the “Invasion” arc was refreshing. I guess I should have! Anyway, good stuff.

Nicholas Burgess

1: There’s a general palette for Savage Dragon and his skin color in normal conditions and the rest is “seasoned to taste.” It’s adjusted to fit.

2: Nikos and I talk things through often but it was established early on that backgrounds on Dragon’s ship had a limited palette and this scene played off that.

3: Neat!

4: Ha! Thanks!

5: Ah...the letters page...

6: Thanks again.

7: Nikos and Mike...take a bow.

Erik,

Hey, so I’ve been reading since the first issue and I’d been meaning to write since #150, but your blank letters page has spurred me to action. #181 was a welcome arrival at my store, after the too-quick #180 and the subsequent two-month wait. I was very glad to see the challenge Dragon brought to his people regarding their social structure and I’m curious to see how it will work out. One would hope that the Krylans will consider his words and work on building a less “lemming-like” society. I’m under the impression that Dragon may be returning to Kalyptus periodically as his second home, much like the Hulk would go back to K’ai to visit Jarella in the classics. Of course, that may just be because I’m drawing too much into the similarities between Lorella and Jarella’s names.

I’m really not too crazy about the idea of Angel and Malcolm being attracted to each other, but I’m glad it’s being handled well. We’ll just have to see how this works out, but I guess if they do get together -- well, Ghost Rider married his stepsister figure, sort of. So there is a precedent in comics.

I dunno how many have guessed this and sent you notes already, but I’ve been thinking the new Overlord is Simon Kane, or some piece of him, since #150. I know he got his head blown off, but maybe he did one of those “thought transfer” things and jumped into another body? He’s the only guy I know of who’d have enough time to sit through the 2001 Spider-Man movies sitting in his bunker, he has a similar stuttering/halting speech pattern, and he seems to be able to persuade freaks pretty easily when he holds up that right hand. His concerns about weeding out the bad guys and freak rights have also led me in this direction. My guess is that he either jumped into a body he can’t fully control or can’t control what’s left of his body, thus necessitating usage of the Overlord armor. Perhaps he’s in a radiation-wracked resurrected body like the one in #65. Hopefully we’ll see in #182!

Thanks for still making this book. It’s a great read and you’re my favorite creator in comics. The internet seems to be under the impression that you’re some kind of dream-killing maniac, but I remember meeting you in San Diego in 2001 and showing you some of my worst drawings -- your response was very constructive and helped me and my motivation a lot. You simply said “Don’t make the heads too round -- use more of a cylinder shape.” I always thought you were a swell guy and I’ll keep reading these books as long as you’re making them. And I’ll try not to make people’s heads too round.

Your fan,

D. F. Lee

P.s. Am I imagining things or does it say “**** this” in the rubble at the bottom of the cover? That space rubble gets a potty mouth.

It’s your imagination.

Erik,

The blank letters page in issue 181 has spurred me to write my first letter to a comic ever. I’ve been reading Savage Dragon since it began (back when I was 12 years old) and I’ve never missed an issue of SD or its related series. I love that you have a letters page in your book and seeing a blank one was a bit shocking. I’m not sure why I haven’t written earlier, but seeing that blank page was a call to action.

One of the things I love about your comics is that the only predictable thing about them is that you will do something unexpected with the story. This is why I really like issue 181. The end of 180 left me expecting a no-holds-barred Dragon vs. son battle that would leave Dragon broken and feeling his age. But of course, you didn’t go that way. It was amusing how easily Dragon batted around his kid. And the coloring choices for the battle were really cool. What a great scene. I also really liked the “meanwhile, back on earth” moments throughout the book (the news coverage of AllGod’s death, Malcolm and Angel).

One surprise with 181 was the cover. I thought it was kind of weak. The placement of Dragon, the logo, and the space rocks is ok, but there’s just something about it that doesn’t work. Maybe it’s that Dragon is a bit washed out and blends in with the rocks. I can’t place it exactly. Most of your covers are just plain awesome (some of my favorites are 64, 75, 76, 87, 90, 112, 122, 142, 147, 166 and the Talk with God tpb) so one miss in 20 years is not something that will keep me away.

All in all, 181 was a great issue. I’m looking forward to more. Erik, thank you for 20 years of fun and exciting Savage Dragon comics and here’s to many more.

Aaron Eppy
Butler, PA

I colored the cover To issue #181 myself so if somebody has to take the blame...make it Josh Eichorn. He’s got nothing better to do.

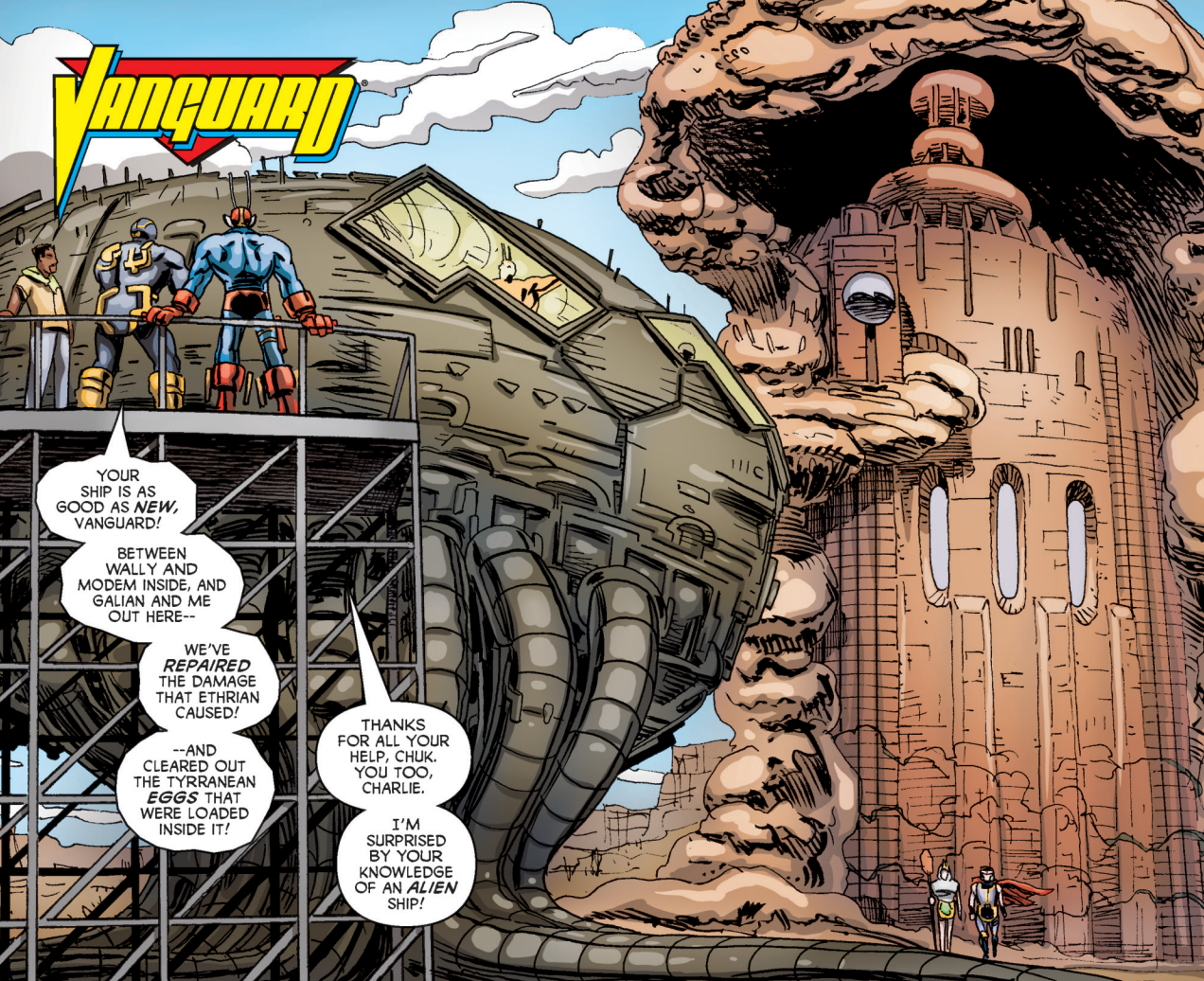
Thanks for writing...and be here next month for more big-time funnybook fun. We’re just getting warmed up!

-Erik Larsen

NEXT: SAVAGE DRAGON ON TRIAL: THE VERDICT.

And hey, don’t forget to keep reading this book for the final chapter of our ever-lovin’ Vanguard serial!

Vanguard



YOUR
SHIP IS AS
GOOD AS **NEW**,
VANGUARD!

BETWEEN
WALLY AND
MODERN INSIDE,
AND GALIAN AND ME
OUT HERE--

WE'VE
REPAIRED
THE DAMAGE
THAT **ETHRIAN**
CAUSED!

--AND
CLEARED OUT
THE **TYRRANEAN**
EGGS
THAT
WERE LOADED
INSIDE IT!

THANKS
FOR ALL YOUR
HELP, CHUK.
YOU TOO,
CHARLIE.

I'M
SURPRISED
BY YOUR
KNOWLEDGE
OF AN **ALIEN**
SHIP!

THANK
POWERHOUSE--

--SHE GUIDED
MY HANDS
AND GALIAN'S
STAFF.

WHERE IS
GALIAN?

GALIAN
SEEMS TO HAVE
VANISHED.

MY **OWN STAFF**
CANNOT SENSE **HIS**
ANYWHERE!

MAYBE HE'LL
STAY AWAY! EARTH
ISN'T HIS HOME
ANYWAY!

ER, THANK HIM
FOR ME WHEN HE
TURNS UP!



I THOUGHT
WALLY WAS GOING
TO FIX THIS FOOD
PROCESSOR!
YUCK!

AREN'T
YOU THE
GUY WHO EATS
TYRRANEAN
EGGS?

TYRRUS
EGGS, YES.

TYRRUS
FOOD, NO.

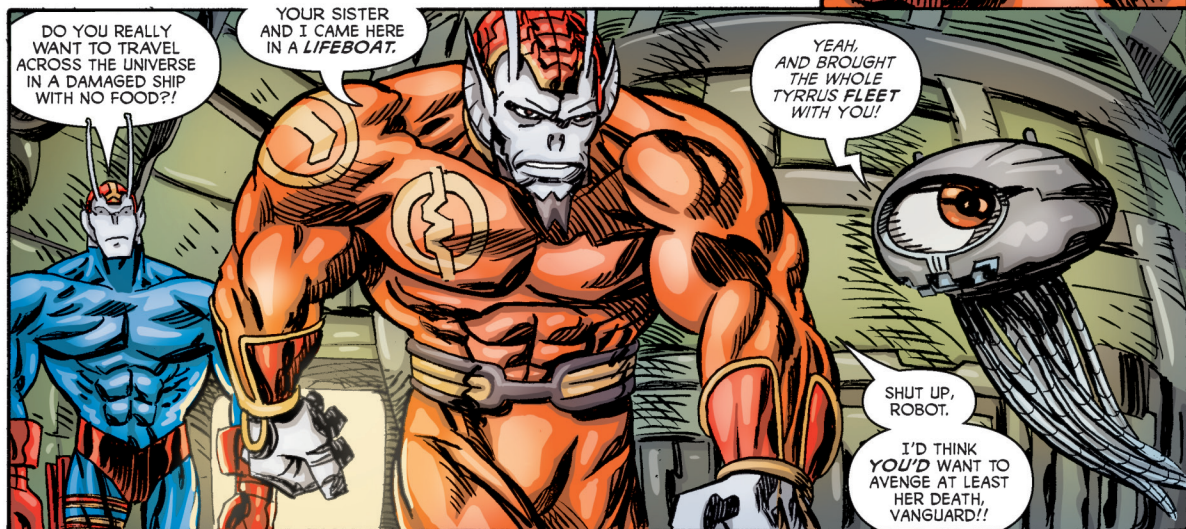
WHEN DO
WE SET SAIL,
VANGUARD? EARTH
MAY BE SAFE,
BUT KALYPTUS IS
STILL **OVERRUN**
BY BUGS!



WE'LL BE
HEADING FOR
HOME SOON,
BARAKKUS.

AS THEY SAY
HERE, **PATIENCE**
IS A VIRTUE.

PATIENCE OR
COWARDICE?



DO YOU REALLY
WANT TO TRAVEL
ACROSS THE UNIVERSE
IN A DAMAGED SHIP
WITH NO FOOD?!

YOUR SISTER
AND I CAME HERE
IN A **LIFEBOAT**.

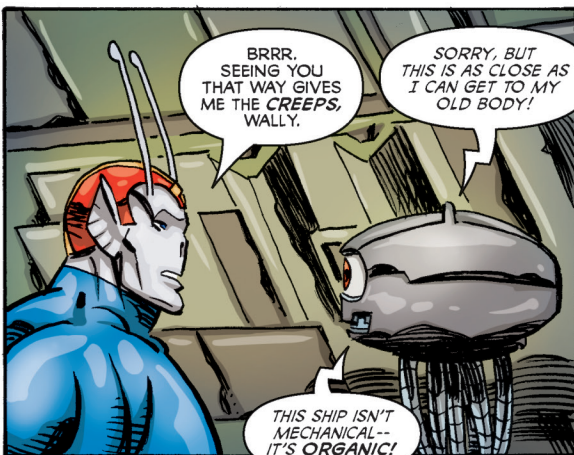
YEAH,
AND BROUGHT
THE WHOLE
TYRRUS FLEET
WITH YOU!

SHUT UP,
ROBOT.

I'D THINK
YOU'D WANT TO
AVENGE AT LEAST
HER DEATH,
VANGUARD!!



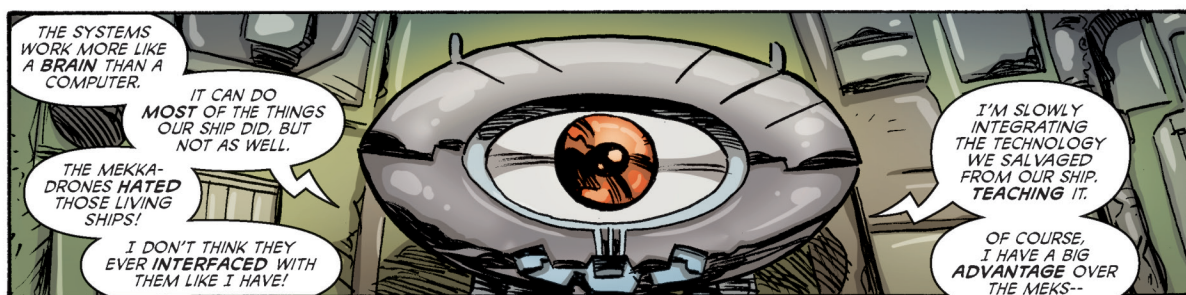
JEEZ,
DOESN'T THAT
GUY EVER
SMILE?



BRRR.
SEEING YOU
THAT WAY GIVES
ME THE **CREEPS**,
WALLY.

SORRY, BUT
THIS IS AS CLOSE AS
I CAN GET TO MY
OLD BODY!

THIS SHIP ISN'T
MECHANICAL--
IT'S **ORGANIC!**



THE SYSTEMS
WORK MORE LIKE
A BRAIN THAN A
COMPUTER.

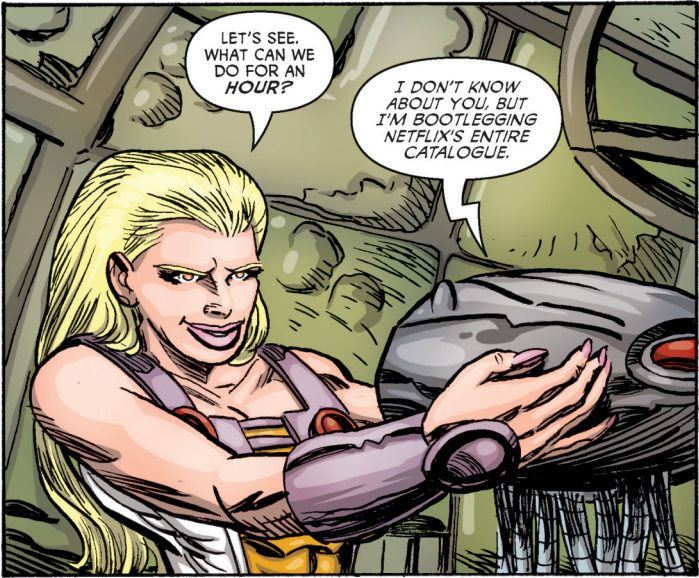
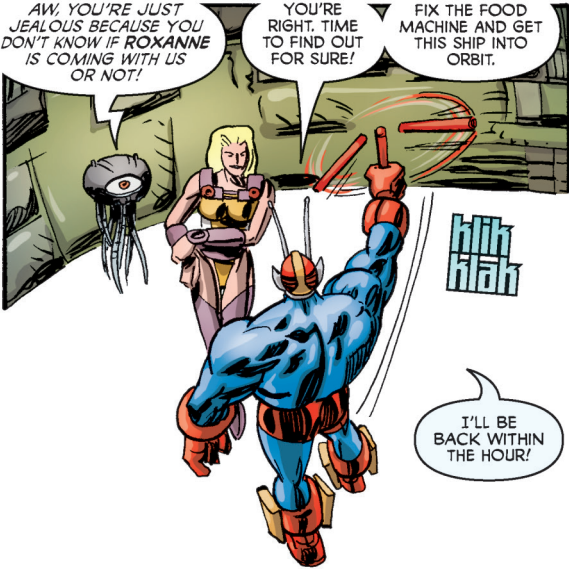
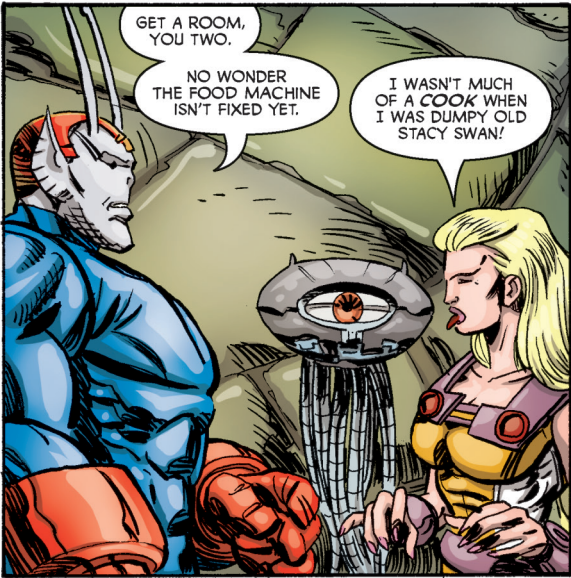
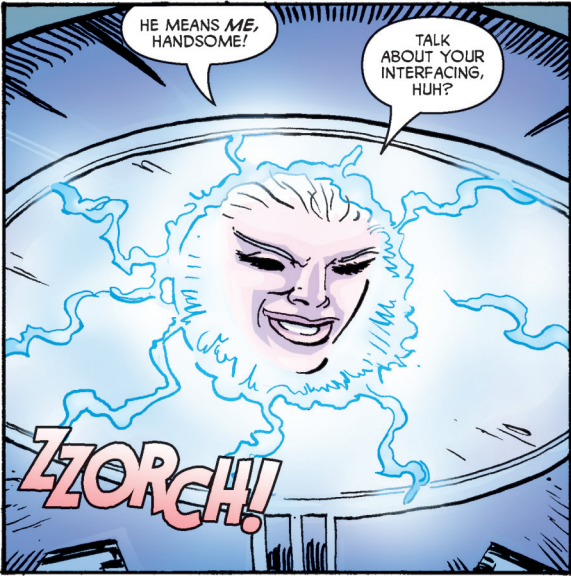
IT CAN DO
MOST OF THE THINGS
OUR SHIP DID, BUT
NOT AS WELL.

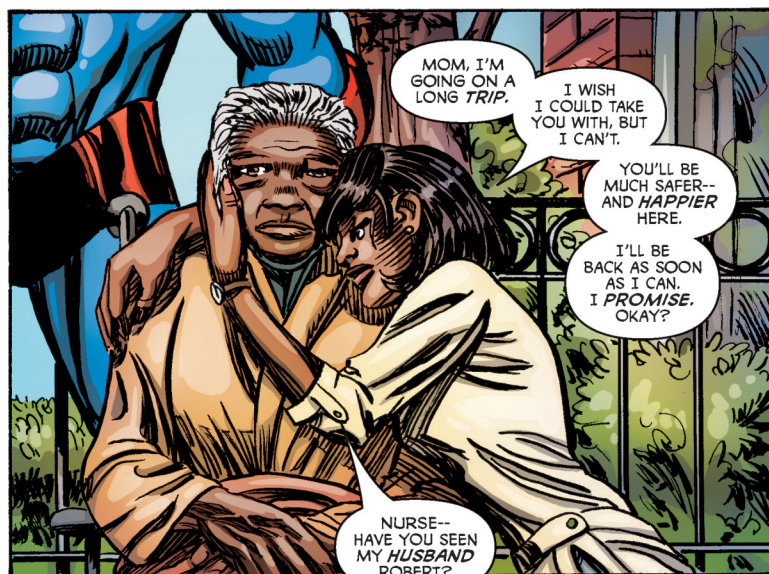
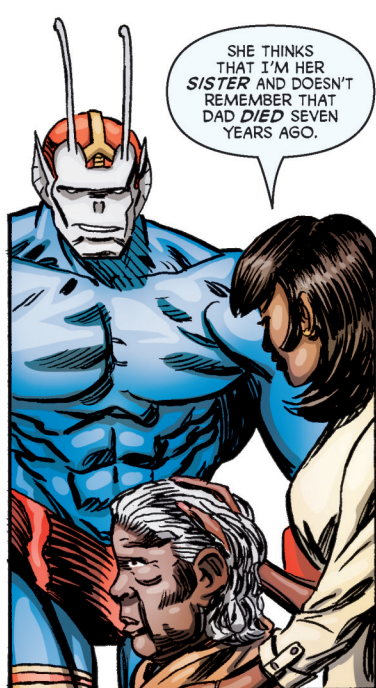
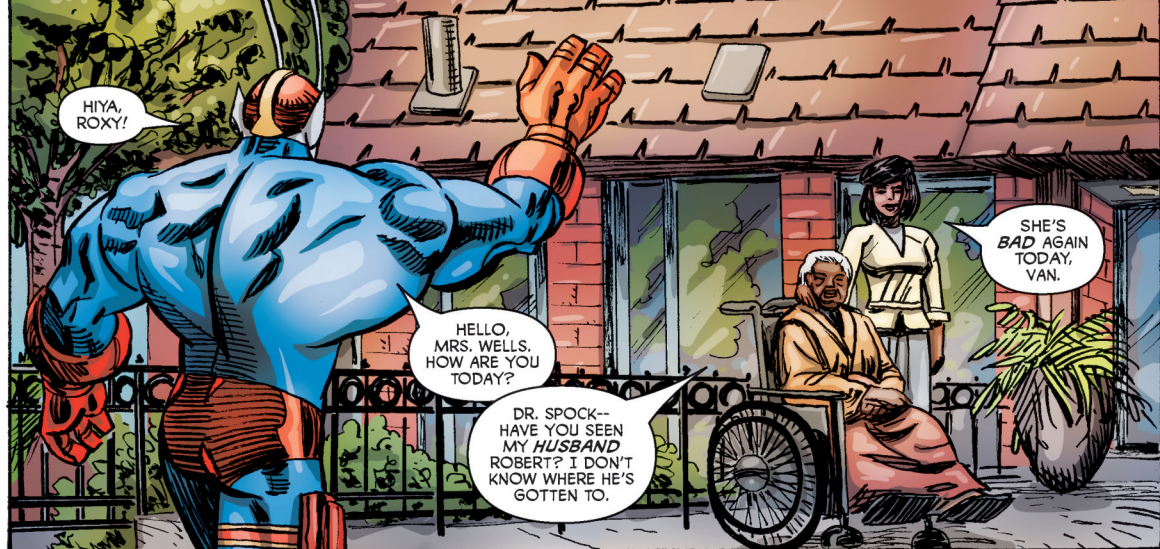
THE MEKKA-
DRONES HATED
THOSE LIVING
SHIPS!

I DON'T THINK THEY
EVER **INTERFACED** WITH
THEM LIKE I HAVE!

I'M SLOWLY
INTEGRATING
THE TECHNOLOGY
WE SALVAGED
FROM OUR SHIP.
TEACHING IT.

OF COURSE,
I HAVE A BIG
ADVANTAGE OVER
THE MEKS--





WORKING HERE ON THE **TODAY SHOW** HAS BEEN A DREAM COME TRUE FOR ME.

I'M SORRY TO BE LEAVING IT SO SOON.

YOU ALL KNOW THAT I AM IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ALIEN KNOWN AS **VANGUARD**.

I HAVE DECIDED TO GO WITH HIM. **WHY**, YOU MAY ASK?

I LOVE VANGUARD. PLAIN AND SIMPLE.

HE IS MY WORLD.

MY FATHER PASSED AWAY A FEW YEARS AGO AND MY MOM HAS **DEMENTIA!** BAD.

BUT I'VE ONLY AGED **SIX MONTHS** IN **TWENTY YEARS** BECAUSE OF THE SPACE SHIP'S ALIEN ENVIRONMENT.

MY FRIENDS AND COWORKERS ALL THINK I HAVE A GREAT **PLASTIC SURGEON!**

WHAT I HAVE IS A **SOULMATE**, AND I CAN'T JUST LET HIM GO.

MEN HAVE WALKED ON THE **MOON--**

BUT I'M GOING TO THE OTHER END OF THE **UNIVERSE--**

--WHERE NO HUMAN HAS EVER GONE!

IF-- NO, **WHEN** I COME BACK--

I'LL HAVE STORIES AND PICTURES THAT NOBODY **ELSE** WILL EVER HAVE!

"AND I PROMISE TO SHARE THEM ALL WITH YOU! UNTIL THEN-- GOODBYE, EARTH. WE WILL ALL MISS YOU."

THIS IS ROXANNE WELLS, SIGNING OFF.

YAY!

HAH! SHE JUST DOESN'T **TRUST** HER SOULMATE WITH ME.

HHMM?

WHAT'S WRONG, AMOK?

DUNNO, THRAAM... SOMETHING JUST DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT.



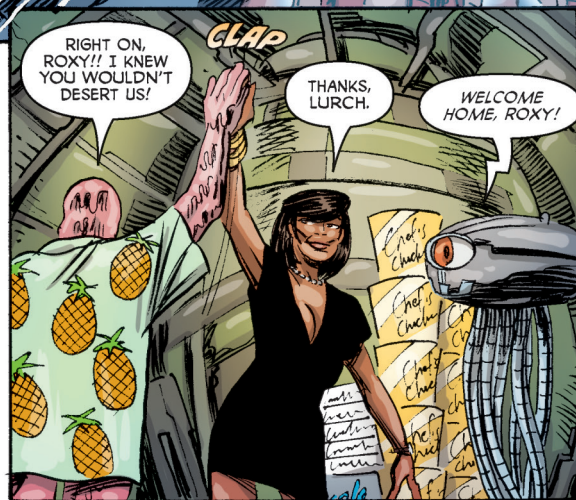
FUASP!

HAH! IT'S JUST VANGUARD AND ROXANNE TELEPORTING UP!

ALL ASHORE THAT'S GOING ASHORE!

CHART A COURSE FOR KALYPTUS! FULL SPEED! WE'RE GOING HOME!

WE BROUGHT SOME SUPPLIES JUST IN CASE WALLY AND MODERN HAVEN'T FIXED THE FOOD MACHINE YET!



RIGHT ON, ROXY!! I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T DESERT US!

CLAP

THANKS, LURCH.

WELCOME HOME, ROXY!



I KNEW IT!

MY SPECTRAL VISION WASN'T PLAYING TRICKS ON ME!



A STOWAWAY-- ONE OF THE POWERHOUSE GUYS!

GALIAN!

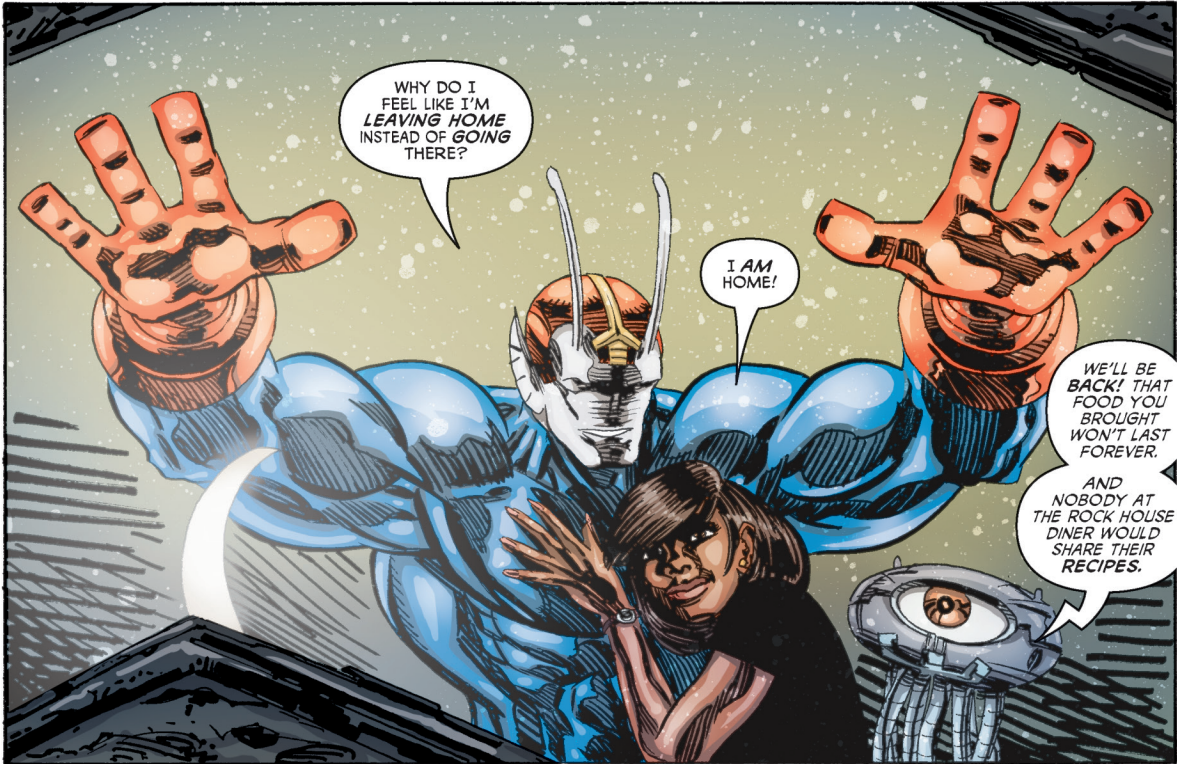
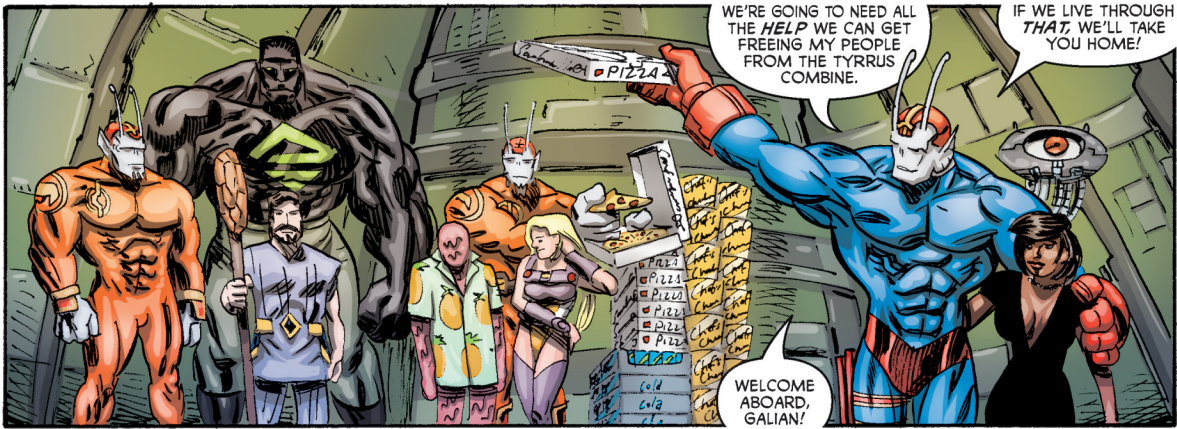
STOP! I CAN BE USEFUL TO YOU!



MY STAFF IS ATTUNED TO YOUR SHIP!

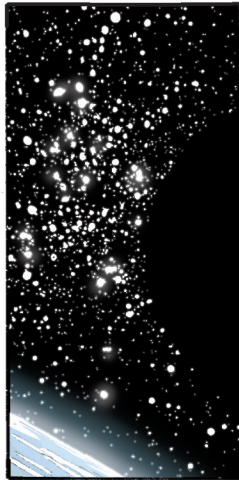
POWERHOUSE LINKED ME TO IT AND TOLD ME MY DESTINY LIES WITH YOU!

MY HOME IS A DISTANT PLANET! THIS MAY BE MY ONLY WAY TO GET BACK THERE!



THE END

STORY GARY CARLSON ART FRANK FOSCO INK ASSISTS KEVIN CHRISTENSEN
COLORS DAVID SELTZER LETTERS & FLATS ADAM PRUETT EDITOR ERIK LARSEN
VANGUARD CREATED BY GARY CARLSON & ERIK LARSEN · ETHRIAN CREATED BY FRANK FOSCO





RATED T+ / TEEN PLUS